

## **REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Prior to entry of the present Amendment, claims 1-3, 5-6, 10, 12-13 and 17 were pending, with claims 4, 7-9, 11 and 14-16 having previously been cancelled without prejudice. In the present Amendment, claims 1 and 5 are amended, and claims 6 and 13 are cancelled without prejudice, leaving claim 2 in its original form and claims 3, 10, 12 and 17 in their previously presented form. Also, new claims 18-27 are added. No new matter is added.

### **Examiner's Interview**

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's time and consideration during the Telephone Interview held on July 20, 2011. During the Interview, Applicants' representative and Examiner Graham discussed proposed amended independent claim 1 and proposed new independent claims 21 and 23 and cited prior art (including United Kingdom Patent Document No. GB 2 347 340 ("Hopkins") and U.S. Patent Nos. 5,878,631 ("Muehlporte"); 7,389,562 ("Linden"); and 6,505,376 ("Kagawa")). The Examiner indicated that proposed new independent claim 21, now new independent claim 23, appears to overcome the rejections. Also, the Examiner suggested further amendment of claim 1, and Applicants have further amended claim 1 to overcome the rejections. However, agreement was not reached on the claims.

### **Allowed Claim**

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's allowance of claim 17.

### **Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112**

The Examiner rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite, because it depends from cancelled claim 4. Claim 5 has been amended to correct its dependency, and, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

### **Claim Rejections under the Prior Art**

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being taught by Hopkins. Also, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5-6, 10 and 12-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Muehlporte in view of Hopkins. As mentioned above, claims 6 and 13 have been cancelled without prejudice, rendering the rejections moot with respect to these claims. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections of the remaining claims.

### **Independent Claim 1**

Independent claim 1 defines a windshield wiper device (10), for a motor vehicle, comprising a support (12), on which at least one bearing (18) is arranged, which supports at least one wiper shaft (22), the bearing (18) and the wiper shaft (22) extending along an axis, characterized in that at least one retaining clip (20) detachably connects the bearing (18) to the support such that the bearing separates from the support in the event of an increased force on the wiper shaft due to impact with a pedestrian, the clip gripping around a portion of the support and a portion of the bearing to detachably connect the bearing to the support, the clip extending at least partially about the axis.

In one embodiment (see Figs. 1, 1A), Hopkins discloses a wiper assembly 1 including a pivot shaft 2 mounted in a housing 3 having a spigot 4. A vehicle bracket 6 is connected to a housing mount 7 which includes a U-clip with resilient legs 9. The U-clip resiliently grips the spigot 4, and, following an impact on the end of the shaft 2, the spigot 4 separates from the U-clip. In another embodiment (see Fig. 8), a snap expansion circlip 810 grips around and resiliently holds the pivot shaft 802 in place in the housing 803.

As discussed during the Interview, Hopkins does not teach or suggest, among other things, a clip gripping around a portion of the support and a portion of the bearing to detachably connect the bearing to the support, the clip extending at least partially about the axis. In Hopkins, the U-clip on the mount 7 grips only the spigot 4 of the support 3, and the circlip 810 grips only the pivot shaft 802.

Muehlporte discloses a wiper device including a drive shaft 4 and a bearing support 3 fixed in a tubular element 5 by "a safety ring 15 or a similar securing element, for example a so-called speed nut." The ring 15 grips around the drive shaft 4 and is supported on the upper collar 21 of the tubular element 5.

As also discussed during the Interview, Muehlporte also does not teach or suggest at least this subject matter. In Muehlporte, the ring 15 grips around only the drive shaft 4.

For at least this independent reason, Hopkins and Muehlporte, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest the subject matter defined by independent claim 1. Applicants submit that the other prior art discussed during the Interview, Linden and Kagawa, also does not teach or suggest at least this subject matter. Accordingly, independent claim 1 is allowable. Dependent claims 2-3, 5, 10 and 12 and new dependent claims 18-22 depend from independent claim 1 and are allowable for at least the same and other independent reasons.

### **New Independent Claim 23**

New independent claim 23 defines a windshield wiper device (10), for a motor vehicle, comprising a support (12), on which at least one bearing (18) is arranged, which supports at least one wiper shaft (22), characterized in that at least one retaining clip (20) detachably connects the bearing (18) to the support such that the bearing separates from the support in the event of an increased force on the wiper shaft due to impact with a pedestrian, in that the bearing (18) and the wiper shaft (22) extend along an axis, in that the support (12) includes a bearing holder (16) having a side wall defining a receptacle (34) receiving the bearing and a radial opening, and in that the clip extends across the radial opening to detachably retain the bearing in the receptacle.

As discussed during the Interview, the cited references at least do not teach or suggest a clip extending across a radial opening in the bearing holder to detachably retain the bearing in the receptacle.

For at least this independent reason, the cited prior art, alone or in combination, does not teach or suggest the subject matter defined by new independent claim 23. Accordingly, independent claim 23 is allowable. New dependent claims 24-27 depend from independent claim 23 and are allowable for at least the same and other independent reasons.

### **CONCLUSION**

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request entry of the present Amendment and allowance of claims 1-3, 5, 10, 12 and 17-27.

If additional consultation will further prosecution, the undersigned is available during normal business hours at the below-identified telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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